



MEETING SUMMARY

TRANS-LAKE WASHINGTON PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE OLD REDMOND COMMUNITY SCHOOLHOUSE, REDMOND FEBRUARY 6, 2001 — 4:00 – 7:00 P.M.

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Pat Serie, EnviroIssues, opened the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to receive updates on the I-405 Corridor Program and its coordination with the Trans-Lake Washington Project, as well as updates about the upcoming Trans-Lake public involvement and community design workshops. Further information was also provided on the definition of highway alternatives in preparation for receiving evaluation information at the March Advisory Committee meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Philip Grega inquired as to whether specific goals of the committee and the project have been determined. He requested information on the project's purpose and need.

I-405 CORRIDOR PROGRAM

Mike Cummings, WSDOT, presented the status of the I-405 Corridor Program, which has been underway since the summer of 1999. Its background studies have been completed, environmental impact statement (EIS) alternatives defined, and preparation of the EIS has begun. It is anticipated that the draft EIS (DEIS) will be distributed in spring 2001 for public review.

The High Capacity Transit (HCT)/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) alternative provides a high capacity system bolstered by feeder buses and expanded travel demand strategies. A transit-focused alternative provides a high capacity system bolstered by feeder buses and one general purpose (GP) lane each direction on I-405. The third alternative being considered provides a mixed mode approach to corridor needs, with balanced transit and general capacity investments. The final alternative being evaluated creates a roadway-focused system with expanded transit service.

The preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) recommendations are as follows:

- Basic TDM package, non-motorized elements and corridor freight enhancements.

- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the I-405 corridor, with expanded transit service, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) direct access, arterial bus priority treatments, transit stations and Park & Rides (P&R) in the corridor.
- Adding 2 GP lanes each direction on I-405 with basic improvements and connecting capacity.
- SR 167/I-405 interchange improvements, with the addition of up to two GP lanes on SR 167 along with arterial improvements.
- Exploration of high occupancy tolls (HOT) lane option.
- Exploration of HCT options for cross-lake travel.
- Preservation of future HCT opportunities by securing use of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) right-of-way.

Discussion

Discussion following the presentation yielded the following answers and comments:

- Approximately twenty percent of the trips in the I-405 corridor are work-related.
- Three different versions of HCT were tested in relation to the first alternative: commuter rail, light rail, and skip stop, with the assumption that HCT would cross the lake.
- Cost information for running the buses is available, as is cost information for SR 167, arterials, sidewalks, operations and maintenance.
- Cost-benefit analysis includes the average cost of owning and operating a car.
- Average hours of congestion are projected for 2020.
- There will be some sharing and similarities in modeling information between the I-405 Study and Trans-Lake. The levels of detail are different, however, as I-405 is a programmatic EIS, not a project level EIS like Trans-Lake.
- Trip shifts from/to I-5 are considered in the modeling. Resulting trip shifts do result in capacity relief in Seattle.
- The BNSF right-of-way is identified as an option only in the PPA.
- WSDOT should have included study of I-5 at the same time, to include the third major corridor in the area.

Jeff Peacock, Parametrix, gave a Trans-Lake perspective on I-405. The express bus option in I-405 is clearly within Trans-Lake scenarios. The performance results of both I-405 and Trans-Lake will be integrated. Once multi-modal alternatives are determined for Trans-Lake, they will be compared with the I-405 PPA and how they tie together. Connectivity for HCT options is already being considered. The Trans-Lake Project is also considering the impacts of access to the BNSF right-of-way.

Discussion

- A concern was raised that Trans-Lake will be constrained by what comes out of I-405. Project staff do not feel that there will be constraints set by the I-405 study or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).
- It was noted that the MTP, even with relatively large increases in funding, still has a demand shortfall that will need to be considered.

- Pat Serie asked if it would be helpful to have any other level of coordination with I-405 study over the next months. Committee members felt they would like to be made aware of meetings, minutes, and other information.
- Trans-Lake coordinates with the I-405 study through efforts at the agency staff and consultant staff level, as some staff are working on both programs. Policies and decisions are made separately.
- A concern was raised that conclusions being reached for one study are based on the other. Project staff assured the committee that conclusions in one are not driving the other.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY DESIGN UPDATE

Amy Grotefendt, EnviroIssues, gave an update on public involvement activities and community design workshops. Open houses will be taking place in the SR 520 and I-90 corridors. The SR 520 open houses will provide information about the project and solicit public input on community design elements. The I-90 open houses will provide information about the project and solicit public input on potential HCT corridors and routes. The open houses will be publicized through display advertisements, postcard mailings, posters at local community centers, community briefings, postcard distribution at transit stops, articles in community group publications, community calendars and cable access TV, phone hotline, and the project web page.

Public information materials include a brochure summarizing community design input, project schedule, and alternatives being considered. Fact sheets on the overall project, committee structure, frequently asked questions, and HCT have also been prepared. The website will also be updated with information from brochure and fact sheets.

There are quite a number of community briefings scheduled through March 2001 with more to be added to the list. There are four community design workshops (CDWs) scheduled – February 26th, 27th, 28th, and March 1st. There is a preview of CDW materials for committee members on Wednesday, February 21st from 4 to 7 pm at Sound Transit's Great Hall. A third round of CDWs will take place in April/May. There will be open houses in June to solicit public input for committee's recommendation on Draft EIS alternatives. A public opinion survey is planned along with additional public information materials.

Discussion

- Bertha Eades, Redmond, expressed concern over the need for people from Redmond having to go to Bellevue to attend an open house. Amy Grotefendt responded by asking for committee input on how to involve more people from Redmond and other areas.
- There was some discussion about how to involve non-interested people. Suggestions included continuing community briefing efforts, and doing outreach at high traffic areas such as the Bellevue Square Mall.
- Around sixty people come to the average open house during the course of the meeting. Public interest is usually low during corridor planning efforts.
- Eugene Wasserman, Neighborhood Business Council, suggested contacting major employers and other businesses in commercial locations, and not just neighborhood residents.

- Virginia Gunby, 1000 Friends of Washington, suggested looking into the transportation management associations of some major employers.
- Put an advertisement in the AAA newsletter for May.
- A public survey may be used. It would likely target around 400 people by telephone.

DEFINITION OF MODAL ALTERNATIVES

Expanding on the information from the January 10, 2001 meeting, Jeff Peacock, Parametrix, presented further information about the definitions of highway alternatives being evaluated by the project team.

The following is a description of alternative B-1, minimum footprint:

- A 4-lane freeway facility.
- The floating bridge will be replaced and will include bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Structures at Portage Bay and the fixed spans approaching the lake need seismic upgrades.
- Westbound (WB) SR 520 between I-405 and the lake will be widened to improve HOV lane operations.
- HOV direct access options will be considered at I-5 and I-405.
- Bicycle/pedestrian paths would be provided the length of the corridor.

The following is a description of alternative B-2, HOV lanes:

- A 6-lane freeway facility with one HOV lane each way.
- West end terminus options include: direct connection to I-5 express lanes south of SR 520; West of Montlake interchange; and direct connections to I-5 express lanes both northbound (NB) and southbound (SB).
- East end HOV lanes will move to inside and terminate at SR 202.
- I-5 express lanes are assumed to continue with current operations.
- Full HOV direct connections will be provided at the I-405 interchange.
- HOV direct access will be provided at S. Kirkland P&R and Overlake P&R.
- Bicycle and pedestrian path connections the length of the corridor.
- Transit service levels will increase by 50%.

The following is a description of alternative B-3, HOV and GP lanes:

- An 8-lane freeway facility with 3 GP lanes and one HOV lane each way.
- HOV connections/termini same as B-2.
- West end GP terminus connection options: Montlake and I-5.
- East end GP terminus at SR 202.

The following is a description of alternative B-4, Bus and Vanpool Only Lanes:

- A 6-lane freeway facility with one lane each way restricted to bus and vanpool use.
- Termini and connections same as B-2.

The next steps are to proceed with modal evaluations, to continue with conceptual layout of modal alternatives and interchange options, and to develop conceptual layouts for multi-modal alternatives.

Discussion

- Mitigation concerns are a part of each alternative. The team is looking at the natural environment issues as well as the built environment issues.
- Input to the alternatives will be solicited as the multi-modal packages are assembled. Materials regarding impacts, performance and costs will be available in May.
- There was a concern expressed about the limited amount of time to circulate and discuss materials between decisions. Jeff Peacock stated that the alternatives and information about how alternatives will be combined will become available as they are produced. Evaluative information will be available in May and June.
- Under the no action alternative, replacement of the floating portion of the bridge could be done while maintaining open traffic lanes, though it would be very expensive.
- Alternative B-1 emphasizes improving reliability, without adding capacity, to improve congestion.
- A suggestion for alternative B-2 was to implement metering rather than designating an HOV lane.
- It was noted that there is no additional GP capacity on I-5 to handle increased capacity from SR 520.
- Anticipated HOV lanes placement would be in the center of the roadway to increase performance and eliminate merging problems for GP traffic.
- Virginia Gunby, 1000 Friends of Washington asked about the I-5 interchange. Jeff Peacock stated that the basic assumption is that the express lanes would continue to operate the same way they are today, and possibilities for the interchange are beginning to be laid out.
- There was a discussion about HOV lanes. Possibilities for HOV on Montlake will be understood better as multi-modal packages are created.
- Contra flow is a design option where a lane could be added in the opposite direction of traditional flow, such as for the southbound express lanes.
- Construction staging will be incremental, and will be detailed in the EIS.
- Elizabeth Newstrum, Town of Yarrow Point, asked that if alternative B-3 became the preliminary preferred alternative, how would four additional lanes be fit into the Montlake corridor, especially if the community is demanding lids as well? Jeff Peacock responded that engineers are in the process of laying it out to physically understand the implications.
- A comment was made that it seems HOV options would primarily benefit the traditional Seattle commuter.

UPDATE ON ENGINEERING AND URBAN DESIGN PROGRESS

Jeff Peacock, Parametrix, briefed the committee on the ongoing design effort, giving the committee a sense of the type of information to be shown at the CDWs. The urban design team will be talking about community values looking 20 years into the future. Values and issues will

be conceptualized to show how such features as the continuity of green spaces and the connectivity of the communities will be manifested in the corridor. They will also look at where the topography lends itself to these ideas.

Discussion

- Property on lids might be considered for sale to businesses, though communities have generally shown a disinterest in development on lids.
- There is general concern over the cost of mitigation and enhancement compared with the investments in the corridor.
- Interchange options at Montlake still need to be fleshed out. If the determination is made that there should be a lid at Montlake, then there will be a lid in each of the alternatives.
- There is concern over forthrightness with the community. If community groups are seeing these drawings and are developing expectations – what do you do if the executive committee comes back with the minimum footprint? How do you present this to the communities?
- If strategies could be employed to decrease traffic, they would be considered as part of mitigation.
- A question was raised about the inter-local agreement discussed at the last meeting. An inter-local agreement along the corridor that subscribes to goals to lower transportation demand may be considered. The concept was explained in the last meeting, but is not definitely a part of the plan.

UPDATE ON THE EXECUTIVE AND TECHNICAL STEERING COMMITTEES; UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE, ACTION ITEMS

Pat Serie reviewed upcoming meeting dates. Amy Grotefendt will email information on the executive committee meeting agendas, as requested. Brown bags will be scheduled, and will be tied with other meetings. Everyone on the committee was invited to schedule a briefing to further discuss issues. Information will be placed on the web pages.

MEETING HANDOUTS

- Agenda
- 2001 Committee Meeting Schedule
- 2001 Public Meeting Schedule
- Highway Modal Alternatives Summary of Definitions for Modal Evaluations
- Update on Public Involvement and Community Design Workshops
- I-405 Corridor Program
- Meeting Summary: Trans-Lake Washington Project Technical Committee January 10, 2001
- Meeting Summary: Trans-Lake Washington Project Executive and Advisory Committees January 10, 2001

ACTION ITEMS

- Make information on I-405 Study consistently available from the website, with updates copied to committee members.
- Focus more outreach on major employers. Include outreach to Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) of major employers. See notices from PSRC.
- Notify committee members of website updates.
- Place ad in the AAA newsletter in May.
- Send information on Executive Committee agendas to the Advisory Committee.
- Brief Virginia Gunby on Technical and Executive Committee meetings.

MEETING ATTENDEES

Committee Members

Present

X	Jean	Amick
	Deborah	Andrews
	Hans	Aschenbach
X	Allison	Beltz
X	Barbara	Culp
	Bob	Dent
X	Bertha	Eades
	Dan	Gatchet
X	Virginia	Gunby
	Mark	Hallenbeck
X	Fred	Hart
	Jim	Hill
X	Gregory	Hill
X	Linda	Holman
	Peter	Hurley
X	Kingsley	Joneson
X	Jean	Leed
X	Jim	MacIsaac
X	Elizabeth	Newstrum
	Nina	Odell
X	Janet	Ray
X	James	Reckers, Jr.
X	John	Resha
	Ronald	Sheck
	Claudia	Stelle
X	Bob	Tate
	Thomas B.	Tochterman
X	Eugene	Wasserman
	Mark	Weed
X	Rich	White

X Roland White
 John Wyble

Project Staff

Pat Serie, EnviroIssues
Amy Grotefendt, EnviroIssues
Joy Goldenberg, EnviroIssues
Jeff Peacock, Parametrix
Lorie Parker, CH2M Hill
Les Rubstello, WSDOT
Mike Cummings, WSDOT

Other Attendees

Philip Grega

JHG